

SPIKE-RUSHES

Eleocharis spp

Many of the 40 species listed in Gray's Manual can be found within the Division. All of the species are wetland plants.

Primarily perennial sedges from matted or creeping rhizomes, the spike rushes are easily recognized by their unbranched, leafless stems which end in single, erect spikelets, varying from a few cm to a meter high. The stems may be 3-sided, 4-sided, round, flattened or grooved with sheaths surrounding the base (lowest sheath rarely expanding into a leaf-blade). The spikelets vary in size and shape according to species, as do the seeds; usually brownish color.

The seeds are the primary attraction to water-fowl, marsh and shorebirds, however the stems and tubers are also eaten by some waterfowl and small mammals. *E. acicularis*, an emergent species, forms spawning grounds for largemouth bass.



E. obtusa

Stems 3 to 70 cm high.
Found in muddy or wet places
throughout the Division.